ИОАНН СКОТТ ЭРЮГЕНА

ГОМИЛИЯ
НА ПРОЛОГ ЕВАНГЕЛИЯ
ОТ ИОАННА

Вступительная статья,
перевод с латинского и примечания
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Греко-латинский кабинет®
Ю.А. Шичалина
Москва 1995
Эрнуена, Иоанн Скотт


Книга представляет собой двуязычное издание последнего законченного произведения выдающегося богослова, философа и поэта Иоанна Скотта (Эрнуена) — мыслителя IX в., работавшего при дворе короля франков Карла Лысого. Во вступительной статье дается историко-культурный очерк эпохи, подробно разбираются сочинения Эрнуена, анализируются философское содержание и художественные особенности Гомилии, признаваемой самой совершенной работой Иоанна Скотта. Издание снабжено примечаниями, обширной библиографией и указателями.

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ISBN 5-87245-021-4
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SUMMARY
SUMMARY

VALERY V. PETROFF

JOHN SCOTTUS ERIUGENA
HOMILY on the PROLOGUE to
St JOHN'S GOSPEL

The only substantial study of Eriugena in Russian
was published almost a century ago. It was the funda-
mental work by A. I. Brilliantoff, *The Influence of
Eastern Theology on Western Theology in the Works of

For Russian students this book is what the work of
M. Cappuyns is for European ones. This fact has de-
termined the task and the plan of the present edition.
Its purpose has been twofold: to produce something
like a guide for those who are first entering into the
world of Eriugena, and to note some moments which
seem to be of interest to specialists.

So in the introduction, *Accessus*, an attempt has
made to sum up the main results achieved in the last
decades by several generations of scholars. In this at-
tempt, the author took his cue from E. Jeaunau's ex-
cellent *Introduction* to the *Homily* and J. O'Meara's
capital summarizing work *Eriugena*. Also the works of
M. Brennan (see *Selected Bibliography*) were used.

Another aim of the introductory essay was to col-
lect and to make accessible a considerable number of
texts of the Carolingian epoch, which concern the spi-
rital and cultural atmosphere of the period and shed
light on the circle of Eriugena and of course on him-
self. Accordingly, the titles of the chapters are ex-
cerpts from documents of that time.

The Latin text of the *Homily* (except two read-
ings) and the *Index verborum* are these of
E. Jeaunau. Comments are based on the notes of
E. Jeaunau, but they are recast and supplemented
with new materials. The parallel passages from the
*Periphraseon* are given.

The *Accessus* begins with a survey of the cultural
and historical peculiarities of the IXth century.

Ch. 1, *Renovatio*, deals with the phenomenon of
the "Carolingian Renaissance": the reform of the
Church, and the emergence of a network of monas-
tic and cathedral schools, collecting texts of ecclesiastical
and classic authors. It is emphasized that the creation
of the cultural and educational institutions was a deli-
berate act: *translatio studii*, which Cicero and Boeti-
us had called for, was eulogized by Puric of Auxerre
in his *Admonitio* to Charles the Bald.

It is worth mentioning that when, in his *Admo-
nitio*, which is full of citations from Cicero, Heiric
paraphrases *Resp*. 473cd of Plato: *felicem fore
rempublicam, si vel philosopharentur reges vel philos-
ophi regnarent*, he seems to have in mind another frag-
ment — *Resp*. 501e — where Plato says that the State
can have no prosperity unless it is ruled by το*
φιλόσοφον γένος*. Just a little further, Heiric mentions
Ireland *paene totam cum grege philosophorum ad lit-
tora nostra migrantem*. Is this word-combination prin-
ted in bold only a coincidence? If it is not, then we
have a remarkable and early example of the kind of
cultural game which erudites belonging to the third
generation of scholars of that time were capable of. It
is possible that fragments of *Respública* were among
collections of notes of various kinds, chiefly excerpts from classical authors, which Carolingian codices contained.

Ch. 2, *Apices hesperii*, the title of which could be translated as *Scriptures or Pillars of the West*, concerns the authors and the writings that played a weighty part in transmitting the heritage of antiquity to the Middle Ages. The fortunes of the works of Macrobius, Martianus Capella, Boethius and Chalcidius in the VIIth and, especially, in the IXth centuries are surveyed.

It is worth notice that the words of Alcuin concerning *Egyptians* in the palace of Charles the Great may have nothing to do with the Irish, as has been suggested, but may concern adherents of Hecate's Ponticus' astronomical theory, which during the Middle Ages was referred to as the "Egyptian" system on the authority of Macrobius (*In somn. Scip.* 1,19,2). If so, then this is further evidence of the fact that the *Commentarius* of Macrobius had already been circulating in the first generation of Carolingian scholars.

Further, special attention is paid to studying the works of Virgil and the Venerable Bede in the IXth century.

At that time, which Ludwig Traube has called *aetas Vergiliana*, Virgil was esteemed not only as the Poet, but as a sage and a philosopher, whose writings contain *et poeticae figmentum et philosophiae veritatem*.

The influence of the cosmological ideas of the *Speech of Anchises* can be traced from the time of Seneca. Thus, when discussing the world's constitution, Eriugena just mentions two common hypotheses: one of Plato and one of Virgil. The culmination of this we can see in MS *Parisinus 7960*: with its marginal epithets applied to the poet: *apostolus, levita, presbiter, sacerdos, pontifex, papa, patriarcha* etc.

But of particular interest to us is studying the Venerable Bede's tractates on natural science, which the scholars of the period were devoted to. Thirty-nine manuscripts of the *De natura rerum* have survived!

The similarity of the prologue of the *Periphyseon* and of certain fragments of Augustine and Bede has already been noted (G. Made, *ESSQ* 80-1; B. Stock, *Ibid*. 86-8). It is suggested in the present chapter as well that there is a connection between the prologues of Bede and John Scottus: the former had influenced the primary plan of the latter in what concerned the fourfold division of the universe.

*De natura rerum* was the object of many commentaries. One of them is of special interest for one who studies the *Periphyseon*. These are anonymous glosses which explain the text of Bede by turning to the *Periphyseon*. For example, the definition of *natura* borrowed from Eriugena is given. Further, the glossator discusses the division of all into those things that are and those that are not. He tells about the genus *creans sive creatum*, and explains why it is possible to call God *natura*, although this is not necessary to the text of Bede. A pair *tempora aeterna — tempora saecularia* is mentioned (see comm. 29) etc.

It has often been remarked that the so-called *Auxerre glosses* belong to Heirc. But now we have good reason to think that its author might have been Remigius of Auxerre (see p.23, n.25). *Appendix III* is dedicated to considering the question. The situation is that we have three texts which coincide almost literally. Two of them are adduced in n.25: the beginning of the anonymous glosses on Bede's introductory verses
to *De natura rerum* (PL 90,104, MS Paris BN lat. olim Sorb. 1827) and a fragment from a comment of Remigius on Donatus’ *Ars maior*. The third fragment is also a commentary on introductory verses (but now of Alcuin) to the ps.-Augustinian *Categoriae Decem* (MS Paris BN lat. 12949). This manuscript was copied after Heirc’s death, so it certainly had to pass through the hands of Remigius who succeeded Heirc as master of the school of Auxerre.

And what is more: Heirc’s *Homily I,11* — where such common terms from the other works of Eriugena as *primordiales causae*, *theophania*, and *monades* are used, and in which Heirc has incorporated about half of the *Vox spiritualis* — bears no mention of the main division into things that are and things that are not. The most characteristic expression of John Scottus, from which his *Vox spiritualis* begins, is just ignored. And it is also ignored in Heirc’s *Vita S. Germani*, some passages of which were inspired by Eriugena too. But this very expression appears to be the core of our three extracts.

Is it an accident that the part of the anonymous glosses on the *De natura rerum* which is under consideration comments on the introductory verses and so-called glosses of Heirc do the same? Both coincide literally. Both are under the influence of Eriugena teaching. How can we interpret this? Had it been a standard formula, depending on the *Periphyseon*, which Remigius applied to both verses introducing the works Eriugena was following? Could Remigius just repeat the material which his teacher Heirc had used in the same case? Was it Remigius at all? No answer for the moment. We need a textual analysis of other works of Heirc and Remigius, including, of course, the investigation of manuscripts.

In ch. 3, *Cunabulum philosophiae*, the genesis of philosophy from the bosom of grammar is considered. The writings of Fridugisus and Godescalc are examples of what J. Jolivet has called “platonisme grammatical”. Special attention is paid to intensive study of dialectics, i.e. Aristotelian logic, which started from Alcuin and was continued by his colleagues and pupils.

It is enough to name Fridugisus, Macarius the Irishman, John Scottus and to point to some anonymous manuscripts in order to show that there was a strong tendency to consider the doctrinal *nihil* as something real. A starting-point of such a view was, according to Rathramnus of Corbie, a passage from *Contra Eutychen I* of Boethius.

Besides, knowledge of treatises of Marius Victorinus is emphasized. They were known at least to Alcuin, Hincmar of Reims and Eriugena. And it is a special characteristic of the period to separate ratio from auctoritas deliberately. Alas, the cultural development stimulated by royal power has come abruptly to an end with the fall of the Carolingians.

Ch. 4, *Salomon sapientissimus*, introduces the personality of Charles the Bald. In spite of never-ending wars, Charles presided over what is sometimes called the Second Carolingian Renaissance. He was known as the “philosopher king” and was referred to as Solomon. He valued books, and there was an atelier associated with his court. Today we have about a dozen richly decorated manuscripts and among them his prayer book, Psalter and the famous *Codex aureus* — a magnificent Gospel. In this chapter the “palace school” is discussed. Godescalc of Orbais (c.849) and Heirc of Auxerre (c.870) wrote about it. Charles himself was the apex of the school.

Ch. 5, *Grex philosophorum*, discusses the role
played on the Continent by the Irish. The great saints — Patrick, Brigit, Colum-cille, Columbanus — are mentioned, and their missions are described.

The phenomenon of filid, who were the official savants and littérature of Ireland, is examined. It is important to fix a stylistic similarity that can be seen between the literary language of the filid, who in former times underwent a "Latinist" influence, and the Kunstprose of such continental writers of the IXth century as Eriugena.

For example, Hesperica famina and loricæ are written in rhetoric, i.e. periodical, rhythmical and alliterative prose. So are other treatises: the majority of the sentences are divided into balanced periods, more or less rhythmical and with occasional rhyming endings.

They were known on the Continent at that time. Is it an accident that the style of the Vox spiritualis as well, according to P. Dronke, is "riche en structures rythmiques, rimes, et parallélismes vigoureux"?

There always were a lot of Irish monks on the Continent. In the ninth century the typical Irishman was the "scholar", not the "saint". We know that Benedict of Aniane warned his pupil against the verbose deception of the Irish, who used the syllogismus delusionis in speaking about the Trinity. In this syllogism a difference between Greek and Latin trinitarian terminology was played up. This is evidence that long before Eriugena, who preferred the Greek formula, the Irish had been aware of this difference.

When Charlemagne started his cultural reform, the learned Irishmen gathered to his court. Sometimes there was hostility towards them from continental scholars, e.g. Einhard. Theodulf of Orleans even thought up a pun scottus — sottus — cottus (Irishman — dolt — bolster). Half a century later, that spiteful joke would be brilliantly parried by John Scottus.

There were two scholarly associations of the period: in Liège (the circle of Sedulius Scottus) and in the north of France at Laon, Quierzy and Compiègne. The activities of both are considered. The library of Laon is described, and also the career of Martin Scottus, who was the master of the cathedral school of Laon, and the cultural influence of the Irishmen is observed.

The second part of the Accessus concerns Eriugena himself. Ch. 1, Scholasticus et eruditus, deals with the beginning of his career. The important thing to observe here are the biblical glosses of John Scottus, collected probably by Heiric. In addition, the commentary of Servius on Virgil in Bernensis 363 is worth examining.

Somebody wrote "Ioh(annes)" in the margin of the commentary of Servius in order to draw attention to what John Scottus had either written or said in his lectures about the contents of certain notes of Servius on the meaning of passages in Virgil. The themes that are singled out concern the return of all to God, the statement that everything is created of four elements and of God is noted etc.

Since there is a similar statement in the margin of a famous codex of Virgil (Bernensis 165, f.131r), the anonymous author's notions of nothing, elements and the world's soul are discussed again. The concepts of Varro, Augustine and John Scottus, who turns to the authority of Plato, Virgil and Gregory of Nyssa, are considered. The original solution of the problem of nothing by Eriugena in Periphyseon I is examined.

Ch. 2, Annotationes in Marcianum, introduces the IXth-century commentaries on Martianus Capella.
John Scottus attaches great importance to the *artes liberales* in his system. "All the arts are naturally innate in all men", he writes; "they make the human soul immortal"; and further, we meet the famous sentence: *nemo intrat in celum nisi per philosophiam*. It is because, as Saint Augustine said, true philosophy is true religion.

And after these references to Saint Augustine John Scottus interprets Martianus from the point of view of Macrobius (*Ann. 21,32-22,19* Lutz), freely mixing doctrines of both of them. To Macrobius' words "the area between the moon and the earth was known as the infernal regions of the dead" (*In somn. Scip. I,11,6*) are added discussions of Martianus' view that in the underworld the fiery stream Pyrplegethon flows, whose name originates in the planetary circle of Mars (*De nuptiis 75,2-4* Dick). Yet Prudentius of Troyes wrote about Eriugena's acquaintance with the cosmological concepts of Varro (*PL 115,1294*).

Ch. 3, *Impugnator veritatis*, deals with the ninth-century controversy on predestination. The main theses of this work of John Scottus are discussed. The starting-point of the dispute was Isidore's word-combination *geminà praedestinatio* (cf. *ps.-Plutarch's De fato*). Godescal developed it into a theory. The teachings of Godescal and Eriugena are summarized with references to other debaters.

Attention is drawn to the bizarre Eriugenian interpretation of Augustine. Some of his theses John Scottus proposes to consider as merely a rhetorical figure of speech called *antiphrasis*. He adduced examples of antiphrases borrowed firstly from Martianus and then found with his own hand in the Bible.

It is said that from the orthodox point of view the objections of Prudentius are irreproachable. John Scottus is wrong to assert that God's predestination must be part of his substance. As Florus of Lyons wrote against Eriugena, predestination is single in the mind of God, but in its distributive effect upon man it is twofold. By the way, the East Orthodox Church distinguishes divine energies and the substance of God as well.

Prudentius of Troyes in his turn accused Eriugena of forsaking the quadriga of the Gospels for the quadrivium of dialectics (*PL 115,1293-4*). Then he enumerates the four cardinal virtues (prudence, temperance, courage, justice) and accordingly the four species of divine speech: historical, moral, allegorical and anagogical.

It is worth mentioning that when Eriugena says that the punishment for sin comes from within the sinner himself, he draws a picture of a palace (*aula regalis*). Its beauty would be there to enjoy both for the sons of the Master and for his slaves. But the sinners, overcome by greed, would merely suffer at the sight of such magnificence. It is probable that here Eriugena has in mind the scene described by Macrobius that concerned the ruthless tyrant Dionysius of Syracuse, who in the splendor of the Sicilian court suffered fear that never ceased and called it a sort of death (*In somn. Scip. I,10,16*).

Ch. 4, *Reversus ad graecos*, deals with Eriugena's translations of works of Dionisius Areopagiticus, Maximus the Confessor and, probably, Gregory of Nyssa. The preface to his translation of the *Ambigua ad Io-hannem* is examined. Here John Scottus has named things that he had learned from Maximus. He says, and it is important, that through positive and negative theologies, the ranks of celestial essences are discerned and put in order. And also: the unity of the
three divine hypostases and the three hypostases of the divine unity constitute the mystical senarius. In this way theology is united with classic arithmology.

In ch. 5, Periphyseon, Book I is under examination. The stylistic dependence of the first paragraph on Cicero's De inventione I is noted. The term natura in Eriugena is similar to that of Boethius (Contra Eutychen I) and Seneca (Ep. moral LVIII,14). The frequent expression "things that are and things that are not" is borrowed from Marius Victorinus (Ad Cand. and Adv. Arium), who in his turn had merely translated the same formula of Porphyry.

If for Porphyry "things that are" were for the most part "the intelligibles", then for Eriugena they are objects of knowledge, which gives existence to things. For Eriugena, knowledge doesn't coincide with things, as it did for Plotinus and Dionisius, but exceeds them (774A). Knowledge constitutes being. It generates the orders of the universal hierarchy (Cf. 444C and the Praefatio to his translation of Maximus).

The primary fourfold division of nature gives way to the principal one — into things that are (that are known) and things that are not (that lie beyond the power of intellect).

Being, as the object of knowledge, is inseparably linked with the idea of locus. Eriugena revises this category. It is not a position of the body with respect to other bodies, it is a logical definition of things whether these be corporeal or incorporeal (474B). This conception, and it is important, occurred to John Scottus from his acquaintance with the artes liberales. Indeed, the ὀνομα of dialectic and rhetoric were called loci by the Latins. The definition of locus made by Cicero had become classic. It was repeated by Marcianus Capella, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Alcuin and Eriu-

genae himself. By the way, Boethius noted that Marius Victorinus had been trying to combine the physical and logical concepts of locus (In Top. Cic. comm. VI). So Eriugena too, not having forgotten to cite Cicero, resolutely introduces loci into the other liberal disciplines (447CD).

The sentence that crowns this discussion is: non esse locum nisi in animo (475B), and further: non aliud esse locum nisi actionem intelligentis atque comprehendentis virtute intelligentiae (485D). Therefore locus omnis, quia definitio est definitio being. A formless piece of reality gets existence by being separated from the background, being outlined. The indication of created being, as Maximus had said, is ἡ προφανής (see p. 234, n. 16). This is most accurately elaborated by Marius Victorinus (Adv. Arium II,4,12-24): "being is some figure, and it must be framed". And so Eriugena: quidquid enim omnino caret forma et specie, non immerso potest vocari nihil (664D).

In the beginning of the Periphyseon five modes of interpretation of the formula "things that are and things that are not" are given. Such classifications of being, which had already been outlined by Aristotle (Metaph. IX,10), early penetrated to the Latin West (Cf. Seneca, Ep. moral. LVIII,16-22; Marius Victorinus, Ad Cand. IV-X). It has already been mentioned that John Scottus knew the works of Victorinus.

The first mode: all things that fall within the perception of sense or intelligence are said to be; those which, because of the excellence of their nature, elude all sense and intellect, seem not to be.

The second mode is seen in the orders of created natures. An affirmation concerning the lower order (man, mortal) is a negation concerning the higher and vice versa.
The third. What is manifest in matter, form, time, and place "is by a certain human convention said to be". Whatsoever is still held in the folds of nature and is not manifest is said not to be.

The fourth mode. According to the philosophers only those things which are contemplated by the intellect alone truly are.

The fifth mode is that which reason observes only in human nature: when through sin it renounced the divine image in which it was properly substantiated, it lost its being and therefore is said not to be. And when it is restored by grace to the condition in which it was made after the image of God, it begins to be.

Non-being based upon privation of substance and accidents should certainly not be admitted in this classification, repeats John Scottus after Marius Victorinus. Philosophy can't manage pure nothingness.

If we look at the Ad Candidum IV,1-5 of Victorinus we will see that his second and third modes correspond to the second and third modes of Eriugena, but the mode with which the Roman rhetor had closed his list has become the first and the principle in Eriugena.

Of course, the real picture is more complicated and John Scottus, as always with him, remade the themes he had borrowed.

If we consider these modes of being and not-being we will easily discover other sources of Eriugenan thought. Besides John Scottus, Marius Victorinus and Dionisius wrote on not-being per excellentiam. The connection between being and the object of knowledge had been set up already by Plato (Soph. 248c-249b). It is in Plotinus (Enn. V,1,4,32-3: τὸ δὲ ἐν κατὰ τὸ νοοῦμενον) and Dionisius (Ad Gaium, PG 3,1065A).

In the Periphyseon man is some notion in God's mind. In their turn, notions in human minds constitute substances of the whole created nature subordinate to man (769A). Cognition becomes creative.

It has always been felt that Greek words γένεως, γένος and γεννώσκω have a common root γν- (Cf. Plato, Crat. 411d). Eriugena displays that intuition in Latin: nascor (archaic gnascor), natio, natura and nosco, cognosco. We create things that are lower than we in the act of knowing them. On the other hand, turning the eyes of one's mind to the higher level means making oneself similar to it. As pure intellect becomes unified with what it knows, the contemplator becomes unified with what he contemplates. For the theologian, this means deification.

The second mode is borrowed from Victorinus, taking into account the arguments of Maximus (cf. Praefatio ad Ambigua). The third and the fourth modes most likely are borrowed from Victorinus (Ad Cand. IV, 1-5 and VII, 13-4) as well.

The fifth and last division has its origin in the teaching of Gregory of Nyssa, for whom the substance of human nature is to be an image of God, to be a mind gazing into divine mystery. And the turning to the sensible region is considered as a loss of this substance, i.e. a loss of being. One must keep all this in mind while reading ch. XIII of the Homily, where the Word of God forms our nature, containing it through nature, and reforms it, deifying it through grace.

Ch. 6, Theologus Johannes. Here the fragment from Expositiones VI, 9 is under consideration. Having turned to Boethius' De arithmetica, Eriugena regards the twenty-seven combinations that can be produced by the nine ranks of the celestial hierarchy as the perfectissimus cubus et primus inparis numeri (cf. In
somn. Scip. I,6,15: the first two cubes of all numbers are eight (even) and twenty-seven (odd)). Again, as in Praefatio ad Ambigua, John Scottus uses arithmology in examining the 6 surfaces, 12 edges, 8 angles of that divine cube.

According to Boethius "they called the cube geometrical harmony" (De arithm. II,49). The numerical relations of that cube, adds Eriugena, produce the musical intervals: the sesquitertian (4/3) gives the interval known as dia tessaron (the fourth), the sesquialter (3/2) — dia pente (the fifth). Double proportion produces the interval known as dia pason (the octave); nine to eight produces the tone. And above all: nichil aliud esse celestes essentias, nisi summe ac sanctissime Trinitatis quam annuntiant epiphaniyas et theophanias in perfectissimis senarii numeri rationibus substitutas... Et cetera que de cubicis proportionibus et proportionalitatisibus disseruntur, non aliunde nisi ex celestium essentiarum adunationibus, in quibus primo condita sunt, in noticiam humanorum intellectuum prouentire crediderim uere.

In this exegetical masterpiece John Scottus unites the theology of Dionysius and classic arithmology. What is important is his conclusion: arithmetical and harmonical proportions, have their base in the concordance of heavenly essences, which are epiphanyes and nothing more than theophanies of the Trinity. In this way, the metaphysics of numbers and classic arithmology become Christian. Structures of science, art and the universe itself turn out to be explications of the divine Trinity lying beyond being and knowledge.

It's typical of Eriugena to play up the polysemy of words. In this particular passage ἐκπάνεια means not only "manifesting of God", but it is also a geometrical term standing for a "surface" (cf. n.196). Eriugena tells about celestes essentias... ueluti intra octo angulos, intra soliditatem uidelicit mysticam future adhuc nobis, non illis, uel certe et nobis et illis, beatitudinis constitutas. Here again we can see the interplay of the species of the artes liberales: arithmetic and theology. It was Macrobius who said that the number eight represented a solid body (In somn. Scip II,2,10: qui numerus solidum corpus imitatur). And those were Dionisius' words, that in the environment of celestial virtues we would receive divine beatitude, if we became equal to angels (De cael. hier. III,9). While we are only going to have beatitude, angels probably have already got it.

Nothing is known about the last days of Eriugena. There are some legends, and the most elaborate one narrates that after Charles the Bald's death he went to England to the court of King Alfred, where at Malmesbury he was stabbed with the styles by his pupils. William of Malmesbury, who is the source of that story, also retells two witty anecdotes. One of them is called the best bon mot of the Middle Ages. It is assumed in this chapter that both table-talks really took place. They are self-sufficient, as myth is. We must take them into account in judging the personality of John Scottus. On the other hand, the story of the murder has to be considered a literary compilation: in this way, for example, Julius Caesar was killed, and Svetonius, well-known at the time of William, mentions styles and a great number of wounds (cf. also Seneca, De clem. I,15,1). It doesn't suit John Scottus to quote someone else's death in his own.

Ch. 7, Gaudia Verbi, deals with the Homily itself. Special attention is given to the artistry of this short sermon. Here the use of poetic images is deliberate. P. Dronke (see n.219) has already observed la fonction
anagogique des images in the Kunstprosa of the Homily. In this chapter an ontological aspect of Eriugena’s resorting to “fictitious, i.e. invented sacred imaginations” (n. 219) is emphasized. How could we face celestial essences that have no forma or figura? Unless they are described and perceived by the human mind, they are not to us. Theology valde artificialiter puts invisible virtues into proper frames of images and in this way, according to Eriugena, they begin to exist for us.

Another characteristic feature of the same fragment of the Expositiones is that theology is called a virtue naturally innate in human souls. In the beginning of his career Eriugena had already applied such words to Sapientia, by which he meant the liberal arts. The head of these arts was Philosophy. Now he states: naturales et liberales disciplinae... adunantur [in Christum qui est] summus fons totius sapientiae. It seems that the liberal arts must dissolve in theology. And that was so for everybody but Eriugena. Further, John Scottus writes that within the limits of these arts tota divina concluditur scriptura. Nulla enim sancta scriptura est, quae regulis liberalium careat disciplinarum (Expos. I,21).

This is another example of the remarkable and constant identification of philosophy and theology, ratio and auctoritas, which Eriugena has been insisting on all through his life. Once, in his younger days, he wrote: error eorum, qui aliter, quam Patres sancti sentiunt de praedestinatione, ex liberalium disciplinarum ignorantia inolevit (De praed., PL 122,430). But this time it is an identification of Philosophy and Christ typical for that time. Later in the XIth century some Benedictine would say: ipsa Philosophia Christus (iconographic study of the subject see in M. d’Alver-}

ny’s "Le cosmos symbolique...", pp.57-8). This text of Eriugena is one of the earliest and most striking examples of such personified identification. We must remember it while reading, for example, such a paradoxical formula as theologia veluti quaedam poetria. If in the Annotationes the liberal arts were means of salvation, then now it comes through Christ. They are inseparable. Therefore, when in the Homily Eriugena speaks about deificatio hominum (296BC), he recollects the argument a fortiori by which rei de qua dubitas possis fidel accommodare (see n.164). Even here, touching the mystery of the Incarnation and the deification of human beings, Eriugena without embarrassment resorts to the tools of the liberal arts.

The Homily ends with a beautiful image where John Scottus appears to be an exegete and a poet at once. Writing of Christ, who was filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and of the lamps of grace shining in Him as it were on top of the mysterious candelabrum of the Church (296C), Eriugena not only bears in mind the Old Testament candlestick of the prophet Zechariah, mentioned in P II,564B, but also recalls the vision of Revelation, where John saw seven gold candelabra which were the seven churches (Rev 1,20), and seven lamps which were the seven spirits of God (Rev 4,5).

In this way, as usual with Eriugena, art meets religion, an artistic sight becomes the vision of a theologian, and things that formerly lay beyond the range of our intelligence now find their existence in us. After all, it’s they who admit us and let us ascend back to where we once belonged.